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KAATERSKILL CONFERENCE

JUNE 23-28, 1913

FIRST GENERAL SESSION

(Monday evening, June 23)

The PRESIDENT: The Thirty-fifth Annual Conference of the American Library Association begins this evening. Custom has decreed that the presiding officer shall deliver a message, and the present presiding officer has not sufficient independence of mind to depart from that long-established custom.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The World of Print and the World's Work

I

Turning for a text to Victor Hugo's stirring epic of Paris, these words may be found in the section for May, and in the third chapter thereof:

A Library implies an act of faith
Which generations still in darkness hid
Sign in their night, in witness of the dawn.

When Johann Gutenberg in his secret workshop poured the molten metal into the rough matrices he had cut for separate types, the instrument for the spread of Democracy was created. When early Cavaliers and Puritans planted the crude beginnings of free public schools, the forces of Democracy were multiplied. When half a century ago the first meager beginnings of the public library movement were evolved, Democracy was for all time assured. Thus have three great stages, separated each by a span of two hundred years from that preceding, marked that world development whose ultimate meaning is not equality of station or possession, but equality of opportunity.

Not without stress and strife have these yet fragmentary results been achieved. Not without travail and difficulties will universal acceptance be accorded in the

days to come. But no one may doubt the final outcome which shall crown the struggle of the centuries. The world was old when typography was invented. Less than five centuries have passed since then, and in this interval—but a brief period in the long history of human endeavor—there has been more enlargement of opportunity for the average man and woman than in all the time that went before. Without the instrumentality of the printed page, without the reproductive processes that give to all the world in myriad tongues the thought of all the centuries, slavery, serfdom and feudalism would still shackle the millions not so fortunate as to be born to purple and ermine, and fine linen.

II

The evolution of the book is therefore the history of the unfoldment of human rights. The chained tome in its medieval prison cell has been supplanted by the handy volume freely sent from the hospitable public library to the homes of the common people. The humblest citizen, today, has at his command books in number and in kind which royal treasuries could not have purchased five hundred years ago. In the sixteenth century, it took a flock of sheep to furnish the vellum for one edition of a book, and the product was for the very few; in the twentieth, a forest is felled to supply the paper for an edition, and the output goes to many hundred thousand readers. As books have multiplied, learning has been more widely disseminated. As more people have become educated, the demand for books has increased enormously. The multiplication of books has stimulated the writing of them, and the inevitable result has been a deterioration of quality proportioned to the increase in quantity. In the English language alone, since 1880, 206,905 titles of

books printed in the United States, have been listed, and 226,365 in Great Britain since 1882. Of these 433,270 titles, 84,722 represent novels—36,607 issued in the United States and 48,115 in Great Britain. Despite the inclusion of the trivial and the unsound in this vast mass of printed stuff, no one can doubt the magnitude of the service performed in the advancement of human kind. The universities have felt the touch of popular demand, and in this country at least some of them have attempted to respond. Through correspondence courses, short courses, university week conferences, summer schools, local forums, traveling instructors, and other media of extension, many institutions of higher learning have given recognition to the appeal of the masses. Logically with this enlargement of educational opportunity, the amplification of library facilities has kept pace. The libraries have become in a real sense the laboratory of learning. Intended primarily as great storehouses for the accumulation and preservation rather than the use of manuscripts and books, their doors have been opened wide to all farers in search of truth or mental stimulus.

In a report to the English King, Sir William Berkeley wrote as governor of Virginia in 1642: "I thank God there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have them these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both."

Governor Berkeley's sentiments, expressed by him in turgid rhetoric, were held in his day by most men in authority, but that did not prevent the planting of little schoolhouses here and there, and men of much vision and little property bequeathed their possessions for maintaining them. Many a school had its origin in a bequest comprising a few milch kine, a horse or two, or a crop of tobacco; in some instances, slaves. From such beginnings, with such endowments, was evolved three hundred years ago the public system of

education which today prodigally promises, though it but niggardly realizes, sixteen years of schooling for every boy and girl in the land.

If the span of years needed for the development of the free library system has been much shorter, the hostile attitude of influential men and the privations that attended pioneer efforts were no less marked. As recently as 1889 the writer of an article in the *North American Review* labeled his attack: "Are public libraries public blessings?" and answered his own question in no uncertain negative. "Not only have the public libraries, as a whole, failed to reach their proper aim of giving the means of education to the people," he protested, "but they have gone aside from their true path to furnish amusement and that in part of a pernicious character, chiefly to the young." And he added: "I might have mentioned other possible dangers, such as the power of the directors of any library to make it a propaganda of any delusive ism or doctrine subversive of morality, society or government; but I prefer to rest my case here."

And it was somewhat later than this that the pages of the *Century* gave space to correspondence in opposition to the establishment of a public library system for the city of New York.

These were but echoes of earlier antagonisms.

III

For the documentary material dealing with the beginnings of the public library movement, the searcher must delve within the thousand pages of a portly folio volume issued by the British government sixty years ago. If one possesses patience sufficient to read the immense mass of dry evidence compiled by a parliamentary commission and "presented to both houses of parliament by command of Her Majesty," some interesting facts in library history will be found. A young man of twenty-three, then an underling in the service of the British Museum, afterwards an eminent librarian, was one of the principal witnesses. Edward Edwards had the gift

of vision. Half a century before public libraries became the people's universities, as they are today, his prophetic tongue gave utterance to what has since become the keynote of library aims and policies. Badgered by hostile inquisitors, ridiculed by press and politicians, he undeviatingly clung to his views, and he lived to see his prophecy realized.

Great libraries there had been before his day; remarkable as a storehouse of knowledge in printed form was, and is in our own day, the institution with which he was associated. But in these rich reference collections intended for the student of research, the element of popular use was lacking. To have suggested the loan of a single book for use outside the four walls of the library would have startled and benumbed everyone in authority—and without authority—from the members of the governing board to librarian, sub-librarians, and messenger boys. This stripling faced the members of parliament, and without hesitation proclaimed his thesis.

"It is not merely to open the library to persons who, from the engrossing nature of their engagements of business, are at present utterly excluded from it, but it is also that the library may be made a direct agent in some degree in the work of national education. Let not anyone be alarmed lest something very theoretical or very revolutionary should be proposed. I merely suggest that the library should be opened to a class of men quite shut out from it by its present regulations."

Then he added: "In such a country as this there should be one great national storehouse. But in addition to this, there should be libraries in different quarters on a humbler scale, very freely accessible."

One of the ablest members of parliament, William Ewart, of Liverpool, became intensely interested in the views expressed by young Edwards, and from that day was counted the consistent champion of library privileges for the common people. Largely through his instrumentality, aided by such men as Richard Cobden, John Bright and Joseph Brotherton, parlia-

ment passed an act "for the encouragement of museums." Out of this measure grew the later public libraries' act. This notable step was not accomplished without bitter opposition.

"The next thing we will be asked to do," said one indignant member on the floor of the House, "is to furnish people with quoits and peg-tops and footballs at the expense of taxpayers. Soon we will be thinking of introducing the performances of Punch for the amusement of the people."

Events in England influenced similar movements in the United States. In a letter to Edward Everett, in 1851, Mr. George Ticknor gave the first impetus to the establishment of a free public library in Boston—the first in the new world to be maintained permanently by the people for the people.

"I would establish a library which differs from all free libraries yet attempted," he wrote. "I mean one in which any popular books, tending to moral and intellectual improvement, shall be furnished in such numbers of copies that many persons can be reading the same book at the same time; in short, that not only the best books of all sorts, but the pleasant literature of the day, shall be made accessible to the whole people when they most care for it; that is, when it is new and fresh."

Sixty years after the date of Mr. Ticknor's letter, and chiefly within the last two decades of the period, the public library movement has assumed a place in public education, which, relatively, the public school movement attained only after three hundred years of effort. When Thomas Bodley died, in 1613, in all Europe there were but three libraries accessible to the public—the Bodleian, the Angelo Rocca at Rome and the Ambrosian at Milan. In 1841 the Penny Cyclopaedia devoted about four inches of a narrow column to the subject of libraries, ancient and modern, and limited its reference to American libraries to one sentence, obtained at second hand from an older contemporary:

"In the United States of America, according to the *Encyclopedia Americana*,

the principal libraries are, or were in 1831, that of Harvard College, containing 36,000 volumes; the Philadelphia Library, containing 27,000; that of the Boston Athenaeum, containing 26,000; that of Congress, containing 16,000, and that of Charleston, containing 13,000."

It is only since 1867 that the federal government has deemed it worth while to compile library statistics, and the first comprehensive figures were gathered in 1875. It is worth noting that then they embraced all libraries comprising 300 volumes, and that in 1893 no mention is made of collections containing less than a thousand volumes, while the most recent official enumeration makes 5,000 volumes the unit of consideration. From these official figures may be gleaned something of the extraordinary growth of libraries, both numerically and in size. In 1875, including school libraries there were 2,039 containing a thousand volumes, ten years later there were 4,026, ten years after that 8,000, and at this date there are in this class not less than 12,000, while the recorded number comprising three hundred volumes or more reaches the substantial total of 15,634, and 2,298 of these catalog in excess of 5,000 volumes each.

IV

These figures show phenomenal growth, but even more impressive are the facts that give their full meaning in detail. From a striking compilation issued in Germany by Die Brücke a few weeks ago, together with figures extracted by means of a questionnaire, supplemented by statistical material gathered by the Bureau of Education, the facts which follow have been deduced: Counting the great libraries of the world, the six continents abutting the seven seas possess 324 libraries whose book collections number in excess of 100,000 volumes each, and of these 79—or approximately one-fourth—are located in the Americas. Of the 79 American libraries 72 are in the United States, including university, public, governmental and miscellaneous institutions, with a com-

bined collection of 19,295,000 volumes. If this statistical inquiry is pursued further, a reason becomes apparent why millions are starved for want of books while other millions seemingly have a surfeit of them. The rural regions, save in a handful of commonwealths whose library commissions or state libraries actively administer traveling libraries, the book supply is practically negligible. Even the hundreds of itinerating libraries but meagerly meet the want. All the traveling libraries in all the United States have a total issue annually less than that of any one of twenty municipal systems that can be named. The public library facilities in at least six thousand of the smaller towns are pitifully insufficient and in hundreds of them wholly absent. The movement to supply books to the people was first launched in the rural regions seventy years ago. Indeed the movement for popular education known as the American Lyceum, which forecast the activities of the modern public library just as the mechanics' institutes of Great Britain prepared the soil for them in that country, flourished chiefly in the less thickly settled centers of population. The early district school libraries melted away in New York state and Wisconsin and other states, and the devastated shelves have never been amply renewed. The library commissions are valiantly and energetically endeavoring to supply the want, but their efforts are all too feebly supported by their respective states. In this particular, the policy is that which unfortunately obtains as to all educational effort. More than 55 per cent of the young people from 6 to 20 years old—about 17,000,000 of them—live in the country or in towns of less than two thousand inhabitants. According to an official report from which this statement is extracted, there are 5,000 country schools still taught in primitive log houses, uncomfortable, unsuitable, unventilated, unsanitary, illy equipped, poorly lighted, imperfectly heated—boys and girls in all stages of advancement receiving instruction from one teacher of very low grade. It is plain why, in

the summing up of this report, "illiteracy in rural territory is twice as great as in urban territory, notwithstanding that thousands of illiterate immigrants are crowded in the great manufacturing and industrial centers. The illiteracy among nativeborn children of native parentage is more than three times as great as among native children of foreign parentage, largely on account of the lack of opportunities for education in rural America." In Indian legend Nokomis, the earth, symbolizes the strength of motherhood; it may yet chance that the classic myth of the hero who gained his strength because he kissed the earth may be fully understood in America only when the people learn that they will remain strong, as Mr. Münsterberg has put it, "only by returning with every generation to the soil."

If the states have proved recreant to duty in this particular, the municipalities have shown an increasing conception of educational values. The figures make an imposing statistical array. In the United States there are 1,222 incorporated places of 5,000 or more inhabitants, and their libraries house 90,000,000 volumes, with a total yearly use aggregating 110,000,000 issues. Four million volumes a year are added to their shelves, and collectively they derive an income of \$20,000,000. Their permanent endowments, which it must be regretfully said but 600 of them share, now aggregate \$40,000,000. Nearly all of these libraries occupy buildings of their own, Mr. Andrew Carnegie having supplied approximately \$42,226,338 for the purpose in the United States, and the balance of the \$100,000,000 represented in buildings having been donated by local benefactors or raised by taxation.

The population of these 1,222 places is 38,758,584, considerably less than half that of the entire United States. Their book possessions, on the other hand, are nine times as great as those in the rest of the country; the circulation of the books nearly twelve times in volume. Closer analysis of these figures enforces still more strongly the actual concentration of the

available book supply. The hundred largest cities of the United States, varying in size from a minimum of 53,684 to a maximum of 4,766,883, possess in the aggregate more books than all the rest of the country together, and represent the bulk of the trained professional service rendered. The great majority of the 3,000 graduates whom the library schools have sent into service since the first class was organized in 1887, are in these libraries and in the university libraries. Forty per cent of the books circulated are issued to the dwellers in these one hundred cities, and in fifteen of them the stupendous total of 30,000,834 issues for home reading was recorded last year. Without such analysis as this, the statistical totals would be misleading. The concentration of resources and of trained service in large centers of population, comparatively few in number, makes evident the underlying cause for the modern trend of library development. A further study of conditions in these human hives justifies the specialized forms of service which have become a marked factor in library extension within a decade. With increased resources, with vastly improved internal machinery, with enlarged conception of opportunity for useful service, have come greater liberality of rules and ever widening circles of activity, until today no individual and no group of individuals, remains outside the radius of library influence. If this awakened zeal has spurred to efforts that seem outside the legitimate sphere of library work, no undue concern need be felt. Neither the genius or enthusiasm of the individual nor the enterprise of a group of individuals will ever be permitted to go too rapidly or too far: the world's natural conservatism and inherited unbelief stand ever ready to retard or prevent.

V

Specialization has been incorporated into library administration chiefly to give expeditious and thorough aid to seekers of information touching a wide variety of interests—business men, legislators, craftsmen, special investigators and students of

every sort. This added duty has not diminished its initial function to make available the literature of all time, nor to satisfy those who go to books for the pure joy of reading. The recreative service of the library is as important as the educative, or the informative. For the great mass of people, the problem has been the problem of toil long and uninterrupted. The successful struggle of the unions to restrict the hours of labor has developed another problem almost as serious—the problem of leisure. Interwoven with this acute problem is another which subdivision of labor has introduced into modern industrial occupations—the terrible fatigue which results from a monotonous repetition of the same process hour after hour, day after day, week after week. Such blind concentration in the making of but one piece of a machine, or a garment, or a watch, or any other article of merchandise, without knowledge of its relationship to the rest, soon wears the human worker out. There must be an outlet of play, of fun, or recreation. The librarian need not feel apologetic to the public because perchance his circulation statistics show that 70 per cent of it is classed as fiction. If he wishes to reduce this percentage to 69 or 68 or 61, let him do it not by discouraging the reading of novels, but by stimulating the use of books in other classes of literature. But well does he merit his own sense of humiliation and the condemnation of the critics if he needs must feel ashamed of the kind of novels that he puts upon his shelves. To quote a fellow librarian who expresses admirably the value of such literature, "A good story has created many an oasis in many an otherwise arid life. Many-sidedness of interest makes for good morals, and millions of our fellows step through the pages of a story book into a broader world than their nature and their circumstances ever permit them to visit. If anything is to stay the narrowing and hardening process which specialization of learning, specialization of inquiry and of industry and swift accumulation of wealth are setting up among us,

it is a return to romance, poetry, imagination, fancy, and the general culture we are now taught to despise. Of all these the novel is a part; rather, in the novel are all of these. But a race may surely find springing up in itself a fresh love of romance, in the high sense of that word, which can keep it active, hopeful, ardent, progressive. Perhaps the novel is to be, in the next decades, part of the outward manifestation of a new birth of this love of breadth and happiness."

VI

Many of the factory workers are young men and young women, whose starved imaginations seek an outlet that will not be denied. In lieu of wholesome recreation and material, they will find "clues to life's perplexities" in salacious plays, in cheap vaudeville performances, in the suggestive pages of railway literature, in other ways that make for a lowering of moral tone. The reaction that craves amusement of any sort is manifest in the nightly crowded stalls of the cheap theaters. Eight million spectators view every moving picture film that is manufactured. It is estimated that one-sixth of the entire population of New York City and of Chicago attends the theaters on any Sunday of the year. One Sunday evening, at the instance of Miss Jane Addams, an investigation was made of 466 theaters in the latter city, and it was discovered that in the majority of them the leading theme was revenge; the lover following his rival; the outraged husband seeking his wife's betrayer; or the wiping out by death of a blot on a hitherto unstained honor. And of course these influences extend to the children who are always the most ardent and responsive of audiences. There is grave danger that the race will develop a ragtime disposition, a moving picture habit and a comic supplement mind.

VII

It is perhaps too early to point to the specialized attention which libraries have given to the needs of young people as

a distinct contribution to society. Another generation must come before material evidence for good or ill becomes apparent. That the work is well worth the thought bestowed, whether present methods survive or are modified, may not be gainsaid. The derelicts of humanity are the wrecks who knew no guiding light. The reformatories and the workhouses, the penal institutions generally and the charitable ones principally, are not merely a burden upon society, but a reproach for duty unperformed. Society is at last beginning to realize that it is better to perfect machinery of production than to mend the imperfect product; that to dispense charity may ameliorate individual suffering, but does not prevent recurrence. And so more attention is being given prevention than cure.

I gave a beggar from my little store
Of well-earned gold. He spent the shining
ore
And came again, and yet again, still cold
And hungry as before.

I gave a thought, and through that thought
of mine,
He found himself a man, supreme, divine,
Bold, clothed, and crowned with blessings
manifold,
And now he begs no more.

VIII

If numbers and social and industrial importance warrant special library facilities for children, certainly the same reasons underlie the special library work with foreigners which has within recent years been carried on extensively in the larger cities. Last month the census bureau issued an abstract of startling import to those who view in the coming of vast numbers from across the waters a menace to the institutions of this democracy. According to this official enumeration, in but fourteen of fifty cities having over 100,000 inhabitants in 1910 did native whites of native parentage contribute as much as one-half the total population. The proportion exceeded three-fifths in only four cities. On the other hand, in twenty-two cities of this class, of which fifteen are in New England and the Middle Atlantic di-

visions, less than one-third of the population were native whites of native parentage, over two-thirds in all but one of these cities consisting of foreign-born whites and their children.

In his Ode delivered at Harvard, Lowell eloquently referred to

"The pith and marrow of a Nation
Drawing force from all her men,
Highest, humblest, weakest, all,
For her time of need, and then
Pulsing it again through them,
She that lifts up the manhood of the poor,
She of the open soul and open door,
With room about her hearth for all mankind!"

This was written in 1865. Since then the rim of the Mediterranean has sent its enormous contribution of unskilled and unlettered human beings to the New World. There have been three great tides of migration from overseas. The first came to secure liberty of conscience; the second sought liberty of political thought and action; the third came in quest of bread. And of the three, incomparably the greater problem of assimilation is that presented by the last comers. Inextricably interwoven are all the complexities which face the great and growing municipalities, politically and industrially and socially. These are the awful problems of congestion and festering slums, of corruption in public life, of the exploitation of womanhood, of terrible struggle with wretchedness and poverty. Rightly directed, the native qualities and strength of these peoples will bring a splendid contribution in the making of a virile citizenship. Wrongly shaped, their course in the life of the city may readily become of sinister import. Frequently they are misunderstood, and they easily misunderstand. The problem is one of education, but it is that most difficult problem, of education for grown-ups. Here perhaps the library may render the most distinct service, in that it can bring to them in their own tongues the ideals and the underlying principles of life and custom in their adopted country; and through their children, as they swarm into the children's rooms, is established a point of

contact which no other agency could so effectually provide.

Under the repressive measures of old-world governments, the racial culture and national spirit of Poles, Lithuanians, Finns, Balkan Slavs, and Russian Jews have been stunted. Here both are warmed into life and renewed vigor, and in generous measure are given back to the land of their adoption. Such racial contribution must prove of enormous value, whether, as many sociologists believe, this country is to prove a great melting pot for the fusing of many races, or whether as Dr. Zhitlowsky contends, there is to be one country, one set of laws, one speech, but a vast variety of national cultures, contributing each its due share to the enrichment of the common stock.

IX

Great changes have come about in the methods that obtain for the exercise of popular government. In a Democracy whose chief strength is derived from an intelligent public opinion, the sharpening of such intelligence and enlargement of general knowledge concerning affairs of common concern are of paramount importance. Statute books are heavily cumbered with laws that are unenforced because public opinion goes counter to them. Nonenforcement breeds disrespect for law, and unscientific making of laws leads to their disregard. So the earliest attempts to find a remedy contemplated merely the legislator and the official, bringing together for their use through the combined services of trained economists and of expert reference librarians the principles and foundation for contemplated legislation and the data as to similar attempts elsewhere. Fruitful as this service has proved within the limitation of state and municipal officialdom, a broadened conception of possibilities now enlarges the scope of the work to include citizen organizations interested in the study of public questions, students of sociology, economics and political science, business men keenly alive to the intimate association—in a legitimate sense—of business and politics, and

that new and powerful element in public affairs which has added three million voters to the poll lists in ten states, and will soon add eleven million voters more in the remaining thirty-eight. The new library service centering in state and municipal legislative reference libraries, and in Civics departments of large public libraries, forecasts the era, now rapidly approaching, when aldermen and state representatives will still enact laws and state and city officials will enforce them, but their making will be determined strictly by public opinion. The local government of the future will be by quasi-public citizen organizations directing aldermen and state legislators accurately to register their will. When representative government becomes misrepresentative, in the words of a modern humorist, Democracy will ask the Powers that Be whether they are the Powers that Ought to Be. To intelligently determine the answer, public opinion must not ignorantly ask.

X

This has been called the age of utilitarianism. Such it unquestionably is, but its practicality is not disassociated from idealism. The resources of numberless commercial enterprises are each in this day reckoned in millions, and their products are figured in terms of many millions more, as once thousands represented the spread of even the greatest of industries. But more and more, business men are coming to realize that business organization as it affects for weal or woe thousands who contribute to their success, must be conducted as a trust for the common good, and not merely for selfish exploitation, or for oppression. As the trade guilds of old wielded their vast power for common ends, so all the workers gave the best at their command to make their articles of merchandise the most perfect that human skill and care could produce. Men of business whose executive skill determines the destiny of thousands in their employ, are growing more and more to an appreciation of the trusteeship that is theirs. A humane spirit is entering the relationship

between employer and employed. Great commercial organizations are conducting elaborate investigations into conditions of housing, sanitation, prolongation of school life, social insurance and similar subjects of betterment for the toilers; but a brief span ago they were concerned chiefly with trade extension and lowering of wages, all unconcerned about the living conditions of their dependents. They too are now exemplifying the possession of that constructive imagination which builds large and beyond the present. For results that grow out of experience and of experiment they also are in part dependent upon the sifted facts that are found in print. The business house library is a recent development, and in ministering in different ways to both employer and employed, gives promise of widespread usefulness.

XI

With the tremendous recent growth of industrialism and the rapid multiplication of invention, the manifest need for making available the vast sum of gathered knowledge concerning the discoveries of modern science has evolved the great special libraries devoted to the varied subdivisions of the subject. Munificently endowed as many of them are, highly organized for ready access to material, administered to encourage use and to give expert aid as well, their great importance cannot be overestimated. What they accomplish is not wholly reducible to statistics, nor can their influence be readily traced, perhaps, to the great undertakings of today which overshadow the seven wonders of antiquity. But there can be no question that without the opportunities that here lie for study and research, and—no less important—without the skilled assistance freely rendered by librarian and bibliographer, special talent would often remain dormant and its possessor unsatisfied. Greater here would be the loss to society than to the individual.

XII

Thus the libraries are endeavoring to make themselves useful in every field of

human enterprise or interest; with books of facts for the information they possess; with books of inspiration for the stimulus they give and the power they generate. Conjointly these yield the equipment which develops the constructive imagination, without which the world would seem but a sorry and a shriveled spot to dwell upon. The poet and the dreamer conceive the great things which are wrought; the scientist and the craftsman achieve them; the scholar and the artist interpret them. Thus associated, they make their finest contribution to the common life. The builders construct the great monuments of iron and of concrete which are the expression of this age, as the great cathedrals and abbeys were of generations that have passed. Adapted as they are to the needs of this day, our artists and our writers have shown us the beauty and the art which the modern handiwork of man possesses. With etcher's tool one man of keen insight has shown us the art that inheres in the lofty structures which line the great thoroughfares of our chief cities, the beauty of the skylines they trace with roof and pediment. With burning words another has given voice to machinery and to the vehicles of modern industry, and we thrill to the eloquence and glow of his poetic fervor.

"Great works of art are useful works greatly done," declares Dr. T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, and rightly viewed the most prosaic achievements of this age, whether they be great canals or clusters of workmen's homes worthily built, or maybe more humble projects, have a greatness of meaning that carries with it the sense of beauty and of art.

In medieval days, the heralds of civilization were the warrior, the missionary, the explorer and the troubadour; in modern times, civilization is carried forward by the chemist, the engineer, the captain of industry, and the interpreter of life—whether the medium utilized be pen or brush or voice. Without vision, civilization would wither and perish, and so it may well be that the printed page shall

serve as symbol of its supreme vision. Within the compass of the book sincerely written, rightly chosen, and well used are contained the three chief elements which justify the library of the people—information, education, recreation.

The urge of the world makes these demands; ours is the high privilege to respond.

The PRESIDENT: We have a very interesting ending to tonight's program in that we have secured from eminent men and women in the United States and Great Britain brief expressions touching our own work. A circular letter was sent to a number of these eminent ladies and gentlemen represented in professional and business life, to the following effect:

"Librarians realize that they can profit from seeing themselves 'as others see them.' At the coming annual conference of the American Library Association to be held in Kaaterskill, N. Y., it is planned to present to the assembled librarians of the United States and Canada brief messages from leading thinkers and recognized authorities in the arts, sciences and letters, and in public life, commenting upon such library activities as are related particularly with their own special interests. Each message may take the form either of criticism or suggestion. We shall esteem it a privilege if you will consent to contribute to this symposium. While we shall be glad to hear from you on any phase of library work which most appeals to you, we venture to suggest the following topic for your comment: (Here was inserted a specific topic suggested for individual discussion.)

Sincerely yours,
HENRY E. LEGLER,
President."

Most of these questions will be apparent as the answers are read. We have distributed these responses among a few of our own members who will serve as proxies for the most distinguished contributors to a program which the American Library Association, I believe, has ever had.

Selections from these letters were then read by Dr. Reuben G. Thwaites, Mr. C. B.

Roden, Miss Mary Eileen Ahern and Mr. W. P. Cutter.

(The following is a list of the questions which were asked in these letters and the replies received follow.)

Are our public libraries succeeding in their effort to bring to men and women the "life more abundant?"

What can the library do to encourage the study of American history?

Should our public expect the library to supply all the "best sellers" hot from the press?

Are our public libraries making returns in service adequate to funds appropriated?

How could our tax supported public libraries be of greater usefulness to business men?

Is the negro being helped by our public libraries?

Does the public library do as much as it might to encourage the reading of the classics?

Is the public library helping to improve dramatic taste?

Is co-operation between the public school and the public library developing in the right direction?

Is the fiction circulated by our public libraries helping to enlighten the people on social and economic problems?

Is the public library a factor in the recent development of a public conscience?

Should the public library exercise censorship over the books it circulates?

What is a dead book?

What rank should the library have in the scale of the community's social assets?

What is your conception of the ideal librarian?

Is it wicked for our libraries to amuse people?

Are the art departments of our public libraries quickening the love for the beautiful?

Are our libraries helping to make better citizens of those from over-seas?

Is the modern city library engaging in activities outside its proper sphere, e. g., lectures, story-telling, art exhibits, victrola concerts, loan of pianola rolls, etc.?